

CHAPTER XXVII

STRONG CONDEMNATION OF PRESIDENT

WILSON

ROOSEVELT'S patriotic indignation because of the sinking of the *Lusitania* and President Wilson's course in regard to it found expression in many private letters that he wrote at the time, as well as in articles that he wrote for the *Metropolitan Magazine*, and in public addresses and newspaper interviews. He felt at the time that he was foot-free politically and could speak his mind without restraint. "There is great comfort," he wrote on March 2, 1915, to his intimate and highly-valued friend, E. A. Van Valkenberg of the Philadelphia *North American*, "in being no longer responsible for the welfare of a party, so that I can tell needed truths without regard to their reacting politically upon any organization with which I am connected."¹

Writing to Judge Charles F. Amidon, of Fargo, North Dakota, on May 29, 1915, he said:

"As for the *Lu*sitania*, of course I agree with you to the last point. President Wilson has failed, and has caused the American people to fail, in performing national and international duty in a world crisis. There was not the slightest occasion for diplomacy or meditation. The facts were uncontroverted. Germany did what she said she intended to do and what President Wilson has informed her he would hold her to a 'strict accountability' for doing. What was needed was not thought or words but action. The time for thought or for words had passed. The thought

should have
come in before we sent the ' strict
accountability' letter. If
the President had acted at that time, then, as
you say,
Germany would have stood before the civilized
world, not
as a warrior, but as a murderer. I do not
think it is an